

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 IO-03 PRS-01 PM-03

SPC-01 L-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 DODE-00

OMB-01 OIC-01 ACDA-10 NSC-07 DRC-01 /069 W

----- 067265

R 120830Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2828

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SEOUL 1617

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PDEV KS KN

SUBJECT: CURRENT STATUS OF SOUTH-NORTH RED CROSS TALKS

REF: SEOUL 1592 NOTAL

1. KNRC CHIEF NEGOTIATOR LEE BUM SUK HAS GIVEN
POL COUNS FOLLOWING DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT STATUS,
SOUTH-NORTH RED CROSS NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING
DEVELOPMENTS AT MARCH 11 MEETING AT PANMUNJOM.
(REFTEL).

2. ACCORDING TO LEE, ROKG SIDE HAD DECIDED TO CONTINUE
ITS HARD LINE IN DEALING WITH NORTH KOREANS AT
MARCH 11 MEETING. ROK RED CROSS DELEGATE KIM TAL
SUL WAS INSTRUCTED TO HIT HARD ON FEB 15
FISHING BOAT INCIDENT AND TO DEMAND OPENING
EIGHTH RED CROSS PLENARY SESSION IN SEOUL.

3. AT SAME TIME, LEE SAID ROKG WAS WAITING
TO SEE WHAT LINE NORTH KOREANS TOOK AT SESSION.

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LAST WEEK, ROKG HAD RECEIVED REPORTS FROM ITS

MISSION IN GENEVA INDICATING THAT ICRC HAD RECEIVED REQUEST FROM NORTH KOREANS TO ARRANGE EARLY RED CROSS PLENARY SESSION AT PANMUNJOM. ACCORDING TO LEE, MISSION REPORTED THAT FORMAL ICRC INITIATIVE ON NORTH KOREAN REQUEST WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. LEE SAID ROK SIDE WAS PREPARED TO RESPOND AFFIRMATIVELY TO PROPOSAL AT PLENARY CONFERENCE AT PANMUNJOM. HOWEVER, ON MARCH 9, THE ROK GENEVA MISSION REPORTED THAT NORTH KOREANS HAD WITHDRAWN THEIR REQUEST TO ICRC.

4. AT MARCH 11 PANMUNJOM MEETING, NORTH KOREAN SIDE OPENED AND STUCK SOLELY TO RED CROSS MATTERS INCLUDING PROPOSAL THAT RED CROSS DEPUTY CHAIRMEN MEET REGULARLY AT PANMUNJOM IN "PRELIMINARY MEETING" TO DISCUSS AGENDA AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO RESUMPTION RED CROSS PLENARY SESSIONS.

5. ACCORDING TO LEE, ROK RED CROSS DELEGATE MADE POINTS REGARDING FEB 15 FISHING BOAT INCIDENT AND HOLDING OF EIGHT PLENARY SESSION IN SEOUL. (NORTHERN REP REITERATED SPY BOAT CHARGE). IN COURSE OF HIS PRESENTATION, ROK REP INDICATED, HOWEVER, IF NORTH SIDE HAD ANY VALID REASON FOR NOT WANTING RESUMPTION OF PLENARY SESSIONS IT SHOULD SO STATE AND ROK SIDE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER SOME "CONCESSION".

6. AT END OF MEETING NORTH KOREAN RED CROSS DELEGATE REQUESTED PRIVATE INFORMAL SESSION WITH HIS SOUTH KOREAN COUNTERPART. AT SAME TIME, SOUTH-NORTH LIAISON OFFICERS ALSO MET PRIVATELY AND INFORMALLY. IN THESE MEETINGS, NORTH KOREAN REPS EMPHASIZED THEIR CONCERN OVER ESCALATION SOUTH KOREAN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE NORTH, PARTICULARLY PERSONAL ATTACKS ON KIM IL SUNG. IN THEIR MEETING, NORTH KOREAN DELEGATE TOLD KIM TAL SUL THAT IT VERY IMPORTANT SECRET

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THAT RED CROSS CONFERENCE NOT REACH A DEAD END AND THAT BOTH SIDES MUST LEAVE "ROOM" FOR THE DIALOGUE TO CONTINUE. ROK REPS POINTED OUT NORTH KOREANS STARTED ESCALATION OF PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AND ASKED WHETHER NORTHERN RED CROSS REPS AWARE OF INVECTIVE IN NORTHERN BROADCASTS TO THE SOUTH.

7. IN PRIVATE SESSION WITH KIM TAL SUL, NORTH KOREAN PROBED AS TO MEANING ROK DELEGATE'S REFERENCE TO "CONCESSION." ROK REP INDICATED GENERALLY THAT IF NORTH KOREAN PROBLEM IS SIMPLY THAT THEY DO NOT WANT EXCHANGE OF DELEGATION VISITS BETWEEN CAPITALS, THEY SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE THIS. HE IMPLIED ROK SIDE WOULD UNDERSTAND AND SOME ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS MIGHT BE WORKED OUT. LEE SAID NORTH KOREANS HINTED THAT NORTH SIDE MIGHT WELL BE DISPOSED TO ACCEPT A ROK PROPSAL THAT CHIEF RED CROSS DELEGATES MEET IN PLENARY SESSIONS AT PANMUNJOM INSTEAD OF PAST EXCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN CAPITALS.

8. LEE SIAD THAT ROKG SOUTH-NORTH DIALOGUE POLICY COMMITTEE WILL NOW HAVE TO DECIDE ON HOW TO PROCEED. INDICATED THAT HIS PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE THAT SOUTH SIDE TAKE INITIATIVE AS "HINTED" BY NORTH IN PROPOSING THAT RED CROSS PLENARY SESSIONS BE HELD ON REGULAR BASIS AT PANMUNJOM. HOWEVER, LEE NOT CERTAIN WHAT EVENTUAL ROK DECISION WOULD BE.

9. POL COUNS ASKED WHETHER LEE THOUGHT NORTH KOREAN COMMENTS RE ESCALATION OF PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN WERE A WARNING TO SOUTH. LEE SAID THAT WAS NOT THE ROK INTERPRETATION. ROK DELEGATE CAME AWAY WITH CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT NORTH KOREANS' CONCERN OVER ESCALATION OF PROPAGANDA WAR RELATED TO THEIR FEAR THAT ROK SIDE MIGHT BE CONSIDERING BREAKING OFF SOUTH-NORTH CONTACTS. LEE SAID NORTH KOREANS ARE SURPRISED AND WORRIED OVER NEW FIRM ROKG ATTITUDE IN DIALOGUE. AT SAME TIME LEE SAID IT CLEAR NORTH KOREANS WANT TO KEEP SOUTH-NORTH CHANNELS OPEN AND AS A
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CONSEQUENCE REMAIN MORE CONCILIATORY.
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